



City of Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission

History



In an effort to improve issues surrounding the 1989 Labor Day Weekend disruptive activities at the oceanfront, the Mayor (Oberndorf) appointed the Labor Day Review commission to examine the events of the weekend and make recommendations.

In February 1990, the findings of this Commission led the City Council to appoint the Labor Day Community Coordinating Committee to provide a centralized planning, coordination and stage of the 1990 Labor Day Events.

Meanwhile, a group of concerned citizens formed an informal Fellowship committee to address the human aspects of the disruptive behavior at the oceanfront.

In November 1990, the findings and concerns of this group led Council to appoint a formal Fellowship committee of diverse citizens charging them with the responsibility of making further appropriate studies and research. After eight months, this Commission concluded that there existed the perception and the reality of the violation of human rights in our City. Consequently, the Committee recommended that a Human Rights Commission be established in the City of Virginia Beach.

August 6, 1991, the City Council adopted an Ordinance creating the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission as an advisory agency to City Council. Staff support was to be provided through the City Human Resources Department.

The Commission was charged with the following duties, powers and functions:

- To institute, conduct and engage in educational and informational programs for the promotion of mutual understanding and respect among citizens, and the fulfillment of human rights.
- To serve as a forum for the discussion of human rights issues, and to conduct studies and propose solutions for the improvement of human relations in the City.
- To provide assistance to persons who believes their rights have been violated by identifying the appropriate federal, state or local agency to address the complaint and referring such persons to that agency.

February 4, 1992, eleven persons representative of the diversity of the residents in our City were appointed by City Council to serve in a voluntary capacity on the Human Rights Commission.

March 12, 1992, the first meeting to organize the Commission was held.

Since this time the Commission has conducted a multitude of forums for the Community, coordinated annual programs that acknowledge area residents for their actions related to human rights and celebrate our city's diversity, conducted numerous issue studies, and advised countless citizens with human rights concerns.

The Commission meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m. Please see meeting schedule for location.